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ABSTRACT

This report gives practical advice to unemployed people wishing to attend further education establishments while retaining their right to unemployment and/or supplementary benefits. It also provides advice and examples of good practice to colleges to encourage claimant study, explores ways to develop successful programs for unemployed people, and discusses some current issues in further education relating to study for the unemployed. Section 1 introduces the general topic of learning while unemployed. Section 2 explores ways colleges can make provision for claimants through identification of needs, provision and promotion of programs to satisfy those needs, provision of guidance, curriculum balance, provision of supportive assessment, and attention to specific needs of adults. Section 3 focuses on deploying resources to contain the costs. Conclusions are set forth in Section 4. Appendixes, amounting to over one-half of the report, include a basic explanation of the unemployment and supplementary benefit system, a basic explanation of the benefit system as it relates to studying, examples of provision made by colleges for unemployed students, sources of help and advice for claimants/students, information on part-time education for the unemployed, recommendations for open learning provision, and a curriculum planning checklist. (YLB)

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A Project Report

OPENING DOORS

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FURTHER EDUCATION UNIT



OPENING DOORS

Creating further education opportunities
for the unemployed

FURTHER EDUCATION UNIT



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Dear Sir/Madam

OPENING DOORS - CREATING FURTHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

Attached is a publication which arose out of a commission from the FEU to Youthaid to provide us with guidance on how unemployed people could study in FE colleges/institutions without losing benefit.

The ways in which the entitlement to learn can be maintained alongside an availability are complex; and we are grateful to Paul Lewis, Claire Horton and John Pelican at Youthaid for the advice received. Much of this advice is contained in Appendices A and B. LEAs and colleges are urged to mediate this to potential learner-clients.

This publication makes it clear, however, that infilling existing courses, reducing fees and picking one's way through labyrinthine regulations comprise only part of the solution of providing programmes for the unemployed. A special commitment is required with respect to curriculum provision, design and delivery by LEAs, but particularly by FE institutions. Section I introduces the dimensions of this commitment.

Section II advises on how a systematic approach to delivering the right type of programmes may be adopted. Section III gives guidance on obtaining and deploying resources. Section IV draws the strands together in a summary of main points. The appendices, as mentioned above, though aimed at the unemployed, should provide a useful resource. Guidance and support are themes that permeate the whole document.

It is hoped that this publication will provide useful advice to LEAs and institutions attempting to grapple sensitively with problems associated with providing learning for those who are unemployed.

Yours faithfully

JACK MANSSELL
Chief Officer

CONTENTS

	Page
SECTION I Learning while unemployed — an introduction	1
SECTION II The curriculum and the unemployed	3
SECTION III Deploying resources	15
SECTION IV Conclusions	21
APPENDICES	
A The benefit rules	23
B The benefit rules as they relate to studying	28
C Examples of provision	39
D Where to get help and advice	48
E <i>FEU Guidance Note Number 3</i>	54
F Recommendations from <i>Implementing Open Learning in Local Authority Institutions</i> (FEU/Open Tech, 1986)	58
G Curriculum Planning Check-list from <i>Adult Unemployment and the Curriculum</i> (FEU, 1985)	61

SECTION I

LEARNING WHILE UNEMPLOYED: AN INTRODUCTION

1. This report gives practical advice to unemployed people wishing to attend FE establishments whilst retaining their right to unemployment and/or supplementary benefit. It also provides advice and examples of good practice to colleges in order to encourage claimant study.

2. It explores the ways in which successful programmes can be developed for unemployed people. It looks at their special needs and gives practical suggestions as to how these can be met. It also discusses some of the current issues in further education which relate to study for the unemployed and may become more important in the future. Detailed examples and advice to claimants are given in the appendices.

Sources of material

3. Most of the report is based on material supplied to the FEU by Youthaid on commission. This material has been used as a basis for the curriculum development advice contained in the report. Appendices A-D, which include a useful guide for the unemployed, are taken from the Youthaid report. In addition, Appendix E is an amended copy of the Guidance Note issued by the FEU in a revised form in 1984 providing guidance on the curriculum implications of the 12/21 hour rules. Appendices F and G are recommendations from *Implementing Open Learning in Local Authority Institutions* (FEU/Open Tech, 1986) and a curriculum planning check-list from an FEU project report *Adult Unemployment and the Curriculum* (FEU, 1985).

Helping in a difficult task

4. Learning while unemployed is a difficult undertaking. Claimants face considerable financial problems and do not qualify for the small-scale discretionary grants for which full-time students are eligible. Claimants must also overcome an inherent instability of attendance because of the 'availability for work' rule. They may well have to leave to take a job or choose to join a training scheme at any time. The fact that many claimants work very hard to overcome these problems shows that they are justified in wanting FE institutions to help them by providing suitable courses and practical assistance.

A worsening situation

5. Today, the common experience of minimum age school-leavers is not work but a pre-vocational scheme, e.g. YTS. In 1984 for instance, barely a quarter of

16-year-old school-leavers had got a full-time job by Christmas. The levels of unemployment for 1985 were even higher. They also showed very marked regional variations.

6. In January 1985 nearly 200,000 16- and 17-year-olds and a further 37,000 18- and 19-year-olds were unemployed. Among the under twenties about one in four was out of work. Work, the traditional route into adulthood, is becoming less immediately available and is being closed to more and more young people.

7. For adults, the figures are equally discouraging, and again regionally variable. Also for adults the stigma of unemployment may be deeper: many adults have lived and worked through more prosperous times and for them unemployment can have more striking effects on self-confidence. The shortage of retraining courses available to adults and the greater likelihood of permanent unemployment make their plight even more serious.

A vital freedom

8. The freedom to study while unemployed is important as it helps people to structure their time out of work usefully. Results could include gaining qualifications, acquiring new knowledge and skills, and increasing the chance of re-employment. This freedom is particularly vital for the *long-term* unemployed for whom these practical results and the useful occupation of leisure time are even more important.

A positive social role

9. Colleges, therefore, have a positive social role to fulfil in encouraging and assisting young people and adults who are unemployed to learn in FE institutions without loss of benefit. LEAs, their colleges and adult education institutions should regard those who are unemployed as an important client group.

SECTION II

THE CURRICULUM AND THE UNEMPLOYED

The basic processes

10. Most FE colleges' curricula already contain the ingredients of successful provision for the unemployed. Indeed, in many colleges the unemployed already constitute a significant proportion of the student population. If an active policy of making provision for claimants is to be followed, the following processes have to be fulfilled:

- the identification of needs
- the provision and promotion of programmes that satisfy those needs
- the provision of guidance
- balancing the curriculum
- provision of supportive assessment
- attention to the specific needs of adults

This Section seeks to explore ways of making such provision.

A systematic approach

11. The development of the curriculum needs to be undertaken systematically (see also paragraphs 53-57). A useful tool to curriculum developers is the FEU curriculum development model (Fig. 1). Like all models it provides a simplified version of reality. Nevertheless, by noting the interrelationship of elements of curriculum and suggestions about aspects of development, it provides a starting-point for developers. Those working with the unemployed should note the relationship of succeeding paragraphs on curriculum development with the model.

The identification of needs

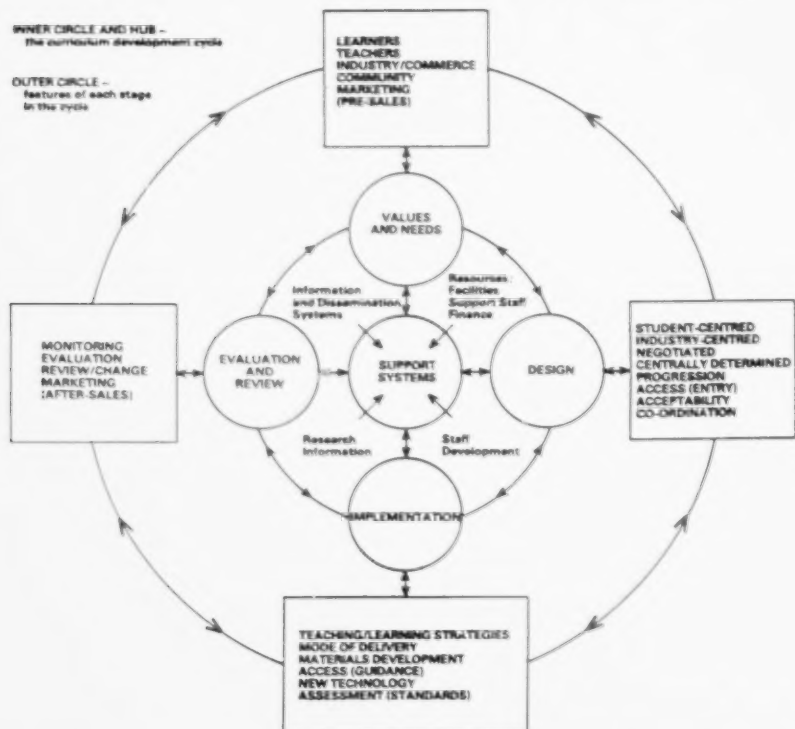
Surveys

12. One of the best ways of finding out about needs is to ask the unemployed themselves. A college which invited local unemployed people to a diagnostic workshop as part of a consultation strategy achieved a good response. This involved liaison with the local careers office and Jobcentres. It also provided useful publicity.

Questionnaires

13. Other colleges have given questionnaires about possible courses to unemployed people already in the college. It is also possible to discover which courses are most popular by a system of trial and error. This is a necessary process, but costly and retrospective and should not be the only source of evidence.

Figure 1: Processes of Curriculum Development



Flexible course structures, like those offered by CPVE¹, allow course preferences to show themselves more naturally once local research has established a broad range of 'subjects' which are to be offered initially.

Guidance networks

14. There is recent evidence that working with organisations for unemployed people and developing contacts with other appropriate community and voluntary groups has valuable consequences for provision. Duplication can be avoided, a more efficient and comprehensive guidance service may be possible and an increase in appropriately designed provision could be achieved.

The concept of a *Personal Guidance Base*² has been developed by the FEU in a number of contexts. This involves a variety of strategies for delivering a system

1. Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education

2. See *Towards a Personal Guidance Base*, FEU, March 1983

of guidance co-ordinating the contributions of different agencies which provide support for those seeking learning experiences through education, training and work.

15. It is necessary to seek information about the age, sex, ethnicity, typical durations of unemployment and any special needs of the unemployed. Likely large-scale redundancies will also need to be monitored. Useful sources of information are the MSC's Regional Manpower Intelligence Units at MSC Regional Offices. These produce monthly vacancy and unemployment digests based on returns from local Jobcentres. In addition, the Department of Employment's monthly Employment Gazette contains valuable information.

Providing and promoting programmes

Attendance

16. The attendance of claimant students is inherently unpredictable. They may become unemployed at any time or find employment in the middle of a course. Demand for provision may be in a constant state of flux. The regulations for changing from 12 to 21 hour study also create problems. Enrolment may therefore have to be accepted at any time, hours of attendance may not always be regular and advantage may need to be taken of the extended college year and other options for flexible provision.

Programmes not courses

17. Care needs to be exercised in the use of the word 'course' to describe provision for the unemployed. The word carries with it notions of pre-planning, inflexibility and prescribed length which all run counter to the preferred strategies for the unemployed of personal guidance, selection from a menu of opportunities and flexibility of timing and delivery. 'Programme', as an alternative, better describes the intention to achieve a selection from available curricular choices designed to suit the particular needs of the individual. It should, however, be recognised that, for the purpose of promotion and publicity, the word 'course' might be more familiar to the unemployed client.

18. To cope with diversity, a range of introductory and 'taster' programmes in both general education and vocational areas could be offered for a limited number of hours per week. These should be compatible with the need to be available for work¹, and the subsequent transfer to the 21 hour rule².

Programmes for the unemployed may have to be designed on a 'roll-on, roll-off' basis to cope with individual needs to start and finish at appropriate times.

1. See Appendix A for an explanation of availability rules.

2. See Appendix E for guidance on the 21 hour rule.

Programmes need to fit in as far as possible with periods of employment, perhaps only temporary, which may begin and end unpredictably. To take this into account, course design may have to include short, repeating modules which are self-contained and not progressive.

Outreach

19. Where adults cannot easily attend FE colleges, adult education centres, youth and community centres and centres for employed people, all of which may be easier to reach, could be used to make 'outreach provision' in partnership with FE colleges. Adult education centres, in particular, offer widespread outlets, a mature environment and experience in the education of adults suitable for provision for the adult unemployed.

Open learning

20. Youthaid and others have long argued that the development of open learning should be a high priority, since it offers the possibility of educational opportunity to people whose family or other commitments have hindered their participation in education in the past. This kind of openness, that of access, has particular relevance to the unemployed. It is important that education is geared towards students' needs and not towards rigid course provision. The FEU report *Flexible Learning Opportunities* (1983) suggests that some moves to more flexible learning can be made, even within the undeniable constraints of resources, legislation, administrative practice and attitudes which operate on and within the FE system.

21. Flexible learning should not, however, be concerned only with the delivery of predetermined curricula from examining and validating bodies. Course design may have to be originated at institution level where special provision for the unemployed is needed.

The FEU with Open Tech has recently published *Implementing Open Learning in Local Authority Institutions* which contains valuable general guidelines on open learning. General guidance notes from this document are included as Appendix F to this report.

22. Open learning initiatives frequently make use of a workshop base. One advantage of this type of organisation, from the unemployed person's point of view, is that much of the learning can be defined as 'unsupervised study' for the purpose of the 21 hour rule (see Appendix E). Open learning encourages self-directed, unsupervised activities in the workshop. It also encourages home-based study on Flexi-Study or similar distance learning courses which can legitimately be labelled as 'unsupervised study'. This respects the rules on claimants' study and frees other time spent at college for essential counselling. Guidance on flexible learning workshops will be provided in *Flexible Learning Workshops: A Manual of Guidance* (FEU, to be published).

Open Colleges

23. Open College systems, such as those of South London, the Manchester Open College Federation and the Open College of the North West, have tackled the job of opening up access to education/training in different ways. The common factors are explicit collaboration between educational establishments at different levels in the hierarchy, agreement as to 'course' entry requirements (whether formally certificated or based on an assessment of the student's experience-based learning) and agreement about progression from one level of study to another within the consortium.

Accreditation and access

24. Consequences of open provision commonly found are greater flexibility, a lessening or abandonment of departmental rigidity, more sensitive student-centred review and assessment procedures, and curriculum-led staff development. These features are not only to be found in Open Colleges. Many conventional establishments have 'alternative' or 'Open Access' programmes with similar objectives. Similarly, local and national systems for monitoring and advising on access and credit transferability now exist; these include the Educational Counselling and Credit Transfer Information Service¹ which provides a database on award-bearing courses in further and higher education.

25. For establishments (or LEAs) willing to promote claimant study, the important aspects of the Open College model are collaboration between establishments, the experience gained in accrediting experiential learning (discussed in the FEU report *Curriculum Opportunity*, 1983) and the testing of locally validated and moderated assessments leading to nationally recognised forms of accreditation.

26. Accreditation of experience will be particularly relevant to FE colleges anticipating an influx of post-YTS 21 hour attenders. Many will have had a full nine months of work or project experience and many will have done part or even all of a certificated course. This is clearly a potentially large client group.

Educational passports

27. Discussions with FE staff who have been involved in year one of YTS suggest that providing for this post YTS group will entail a careful programme of assessment of education/ training needs and a locally validated record of achievement. Manchester Open College's 'Passport' provides just such a flexible and accurate way of certificating diverse exam and experience-based learn-

1. ECCTIS may be contacted at P O Box 88, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6DB. Note however that the database covers at present only courses in higher education and advanced further education nationally. Information on courses in further education as a whole are currently available only for S W England and Northern Ireland.

ing. This consists of an agreed statement produced in a concise and presentable form acceptable for progression and employment purposes. It combines validity for employers and institutions with acceptability for students.

Simple design

28. Promotion should be regarded as part of a coherent marketing strategy and the promotion of programmes, whether for the employed or unemployed, should be a planned and systematic process. The basic rule is that material should be simple and readable and it should explain the possibilities of claimant study. College prospectuses tend to be too large and expensive for mass circulation. Many colleges have therefore developed their own short leaflets promoting special provision. Many print special leaflets in local community languages. *Linking Schools and Colleges* (FEU, 1985) provides recommendations for course publicity based on three levels of access: map, advertisement and leaflet. Each provides increasing detail for the enquiring student.

Targeting and dissemination

29. Once promotion material is designed, it is vital to ensure that it is properly distributed and, if intended for the unemployed, that it is efficiently targeted.

30. Careers Centres, schools, Jobcentres and benefit offices are obvious venues, and voluntary, trade union and community centres, including centres for the unemployed, are others. The careers service will readily provide support for colleges wishing to promote claimant study for younger people. This is especially true where specialist unemployment officers or outreach specialists exist. One of the college exemplars in Appendix C demonstrates how specialist officers can be used to contact all members of a target group, e.g. YTS trainees about to finish their scheme.

31. Jobcentres are willing to help promote claimant study amongst older people. Often they may allow college staff to hold periodic advice sessions on their premises. Centres for the unemployed may not only disseminate information, but also give space for counselling advice sessions.

32. A known location should be publicised by the college where more detailed advice on benefit rules and their implications could be given. This may be in or outside the college, for example local advice centres or Citizens' Advice Bureaux (CABs).

33. Some LEAs have produced very good guidance for school-leavers, e.g. Newcastle has an excellent pocket-sized guide. The South Manchester Law Centre has produced a guide which is directly relevant to adult claimants and Wolverhampton Council has an excellent series of leaflets on education provision for the unemployed.¹

1. See Appendix D

Using the media

34. Another useful way to reach claimants is by widespread use of local media, including local radio, newspapers and television, in order to make initial contact and advise people where to go for further information. Once contacted, claimants and other students and former students can be involved in publicity networks.

The provision of guidance

35. Guidance and counselling is a priority in this kind of provision. Where it is not given priority there may be particular problems for part-time attenders. Claimant students frequently run into problems with the DHSS. Lack of money is a constant source of anxiety and there is uncertainty about educational progress. Specific advice on such problems is provided in Appendix B. Also, from the college examples in Appendix C, it can be seen that claimant study must lead to a growth in guidance and counselling provision. Without special help, students encountering benefit problems may well leave a course and this discourages further potential claimant students from enrolling. Making advice pamphlets and addresses of useful organisations available in the college is a useful way of improving advice services.

36. There is a variety of ways in which successful guidance and counselling can be offered. The important thing from the claimants' point of view is to make this frequently available so that part-time attendance can coincide with advice sessions. One college achieves this by allocating guidance and counselling to several different staff, who provide a one-hour service at a wide variety of times.¹ 'Surgeries' from welfare organisations based outside the college should also be held at times when claimant students are most likely to be in the college.

37. On courses such as CPVE, because it is a school to work transition programme, guidance is an integral part of the curriculum. Unemployed adults are also in transition so a general development of the guidance role is needed on all types of courses for the unemployed.

38. Reference has already been made to the necessity for flexibility in curricular arrangements and in matching individual needs to education and training provision. Students may need additional assistance where arrangements for MSC-funded courses favour the employed rather than the unemployed and, in the latter category, the readily employable rather than the disadvantaged. It may be possible by making flexible course arrangements, by negotiating with

1. Also see FEU Project RP242 *An Interactive Guidance Package for the Adult Unemployed* which is developing an interactive package which will facilitate self-assessment.

the funding body and by infilling arrangements (see also Section III) to accommodate the special needs of unemployed and disadvantaged students even though the main purpose of courses may be to provide for the employed.

Interpreting the 21 hour rule

39. There are some problems of interpretation of the 21 hour rule on which tutors should be in a position to give advice. Further information is provided in Appendix B Section 3, particularly on specific problems such as:

- i) ignorance of the detail of the availability rule, the 21 hour rule and the benefit system generally;
- ii) confusion between benefit and LEA discretionary support;
- iii) the cessation of child benefit once supplementary benefit is claimed by the child after leaving school;
- iv) anxiety about money;
- v) the implications of the transfer from full- to part-time attendance.

In addition, *FEU Guidance Note 3* on the curriculum implications of the 12/21 hour rules may provide useful guidance (Appendix E).

Balancing the curriculum

40. The first intention of claimants undertaking study is usually to improve their chances of employment. It is essential nevertheless that the need of the unemployed to undertake education for personal development as well as job-related training is recognised. This is particularly important with regard to FE provision for unemployed people who have already been through vocational training programmes and are unable to get work afterwards. Programmes for starting a small business, for example, often require a refurbishing of basic general skills.¹

41. There are already large numbers of adults and younger people with experience of YOP, YTS, TOPS and the Community Programme who are still jobless. Over the next few years unemployed leavers from MSC schemes will be joined by some who have experienced TVEI² and those holding the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education. There is evidence of increasing numbers of long-term unemployed, longer average periods of unemployment and that unemployment is moving up the age-groups from school-leavers to 18- and 19-year-olds (*MSC Annual Report 1984-85*). These trends make it important that jobs should not be the only consideration of curriculum planning.

1. See *FEU Enterprise Education Bulletin No. 1 — Delivering Entrepreneurial Skills* (FEU, January 1986)

2 Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative — An MSC initiative proposed in 1982 to encourage new curriculum development in 14-18 education, with an emphasis towards preparation for the world of work and adult life. See *Supporting TVEI* (FEU, 1985).

42. A revitalised demand for labour in traditional manufacturing sectors is generally accepted as unlikely, although there may well be localised or sectoral skill shortages which FE colleges will be aiming to meet. There are three practical implications of this:

(i) Limitations of job-related training

Not all training for the unemployed can be based on proven local employment needs. Training ought therefore to have a wider base, with transferable skills as the main objective but skills for personal development an important consideration.

(ii) Coping with unemployment

Foundation education/training for young and older unemployed people needs to address the issues of unemployment and coping with it, and the possibilities of further study if unemployment continues. Experience of general educational opportunities provided in most adult education programmes can be a great confidence booster and act as a preparation for alternative life roles necessitated by unemployment. Relevant educational programmes should provide competence for a variety of life roles in and out of employment.

(iii) MSC funding and non-vocational elements

Where the MSC pays the fees, it may be difficult to incorporate course elements not strictly related to job preparation. College staff should negotiate directly with MSC for the inclusion of such elements. An alternative is to offer distinct non-tutored and/or evening only modules in which such topics can be covered.

Provision of supportive assessment

Assessment and certification

43. Assessment has the same functions for claimants as for other students. Assessment indicates levels of progress and attainment to both teacher and taught. It should be used at the start of, during and at the end of a course or period of study. It should be formative as well as summative¹. Certification, on the other hand, gives currency to learning. A sensitive balance should be achieved between supportive assessment and that required for certification.

44. Many claimant attenders see their studies as a means to an end: an increased probability of obtaining employment or a chance for progression to further

1. i.e. assessment should contribute to progression in the educational process by providing feedback to tutor and student as well as providing a judgement of grade or performance.

study. For these, recognised certification is desirable and essential. Certification should be based on assessments which are understood and accepted by students, education staff and employers. The situation should be improved by the Review of Vocational Qualifications currently being undertaken nationally. This will mean progression and transfer between different vocational routes will be easier to achieve.

45. Many established examinations are 'norm' referenced, that is, the grade allocated to the student depends on his/her assessed attainment relative to other candidates. Most vocational assessment systems are however 'criterion' referenced, that is, grades show attainment of absolute levels of achievement or competence. Many vocational qualifications are performance based, as in CPVE. Also the new GCSE will be criterion referenced. Used in conjunction with counselling, competence-based assessments can provide real motivation, even to the most inexperienced learners.

Profiles

46. Assessments recorded as profiles can be an important aid to course evaluation and development and to student self-assessment (see, for example, *Trainee Centred Reviewing*, MSC, 1981; *Profiles in Action*, FEU, 1984). However, because they encourage a wider range of assessment, there are problems to be overcome. These include subjectivity, the inherent difficulty of grading in a valid and reliable way and overcoming entrenched attitudes amongst students, teachers and employers. All methods of assessment have similar problems, but profiling as a method has the additional problem of unfamiliarity where credibility with employers is in question. However, an overriding advantage of profiling remains that it removes the stigma of failure.

Using IT

47. Information technology should be able to play a major part in opening up access to assessment leading to recognised qualifications. IT developments are likely to promote significant growth in open and/or distance learning, allowing, in theory at least, students of all ages to have access to systematic tuition and testing, virtually on a one-to-one basis. It is too early to judge whether information technology will in fact open up access in a significant way, and whether unemployed people with little money will be able to benefit, but there is little doubt that it has the potential to provide a major contribution to more flexible learning opportunities generally.

48. In the long run, the use of interactive computer networks for the purposes of testing and assessment can be expected to bring real costs down¹. As cost is

¹ See FEU project RP242 *An Interactive Guidance Package for the Adult Unemployed*.

one of the limiting factors on improved assessment, a commitment to information technology should increase its viability.

49. Once these difficulties are overcome, the new ways of assessing and grading achievement should prove to be more acceptable to, and helpful for, claimant students. Many will have had little or no contact with formal education since leaving school and some of them may be disenchanted with an exam system which recorded only their relative failure. The new assessment methods concentrate instead on what people can do. They should provide a better guide to a person's capabilities.

The specific needs of adults

Self-confidence

50. The provision of flexible courses, available to a wide range of people, is the solution towards which many colleges are moving. It must be remembered that adults have needs which are distinct from those of the young unemployed in some respects. Their experiences of unemployment may differ considerably. Adults may have been unemployed for much longer periods. They may belong to a generation for which unemployment is a stigma and they may lack self-confidence and self-esteem to an even greater extent than younger people.

Teaching method and expectations

51. Many traditionally examined courses have been developed for young people with tasks relevant to their life experience. As new provision increases it is important that, for maximum accessibility, courses should be redesigned with adults in mind. If college staff have previously taught only young people and wish to open up courses, they will have to consider altering the method of presentation of subject matter to recognise the prior experience and competences of adults. In-service training will be essential.

52. It is important to avoid stereotyping of the potential client groups. The extent of unemployment in adults, as in young people, makes it likely that 'the adult unemployed' will contain a wide cross-section of ability and attainment. Some will have firm vocational or educational goals, some will need sympathetic and confidential counselling to work out their goals. It is important that counselling services are accessible to part-time attenders and to adults in particular.

Learning needs — a systematic approach

53. The specific learning needs of adults are distinct in some respects from those of young people. In particular, the life and work experience of adults will make an important contribution to their actual and perceived needs. A systematic

approach to the development of curricula with adults in mind is described in *Curriculum Development in the Education of Adults* (FEU, 1985).

54. The systematic approach described uses the interrelationship of the four key features of curriculum design (Aims, Design, Implementation and Evaluation) and their impact on adult education at three levels: area, institution and course.

55. Many of the features of this systematic approach (cf FEU model, paragraph 11), as well as applying to adults, apply equally to the education of school-leavers entering further education. Nevertheless, the check-lists contained in that report pay particular attention to the necessity in the education of adults for consultative management structures involving the clients themselves and responsive rather than autocratic policy development negotiated with adult clients.

Active learning

56. Adults especially will respond to methods which actively engage them in their own learning, for example, by negotiation over the method and mode of learning. Commitment to such consultation and negotiation may entail major adjustments in management style and curriculum planning. These are essential if provision for unemployed adults is to succeed.

57. Space does not permit a detailed survey of the conclusions of *Curriculum Development in the Education of Adults*. Many of its recommendations are reflected in the body of this document. It does, however, contain useful detailed checklists of particular value to adult educators. Copies are available from the FEU.

SECTION III

DEPLOYING RESOURCES

Containing the cost

58. Since self-financing is an unrealistic aim for courses for the unemployed, strategies may well have to be developed to contain the cost of such courses. There are several ways in which cost may be reduced or provision made more efficient.

Infilling

59. Youthaid's research in colleges with claimant attenders suggested that claimant attendance was to be found across the whole range of non-advanced provision. However, for about 70% of claimant attenders under 19 years old, access was in the form of infilling to established courses, mostly examined and starting in September. (see also para. 76)

60. Although many establishments and their LEAs remit or waive fees for 'infill' places for unemployed people, colleges can be discouraged from moving to a more active development of appropriate curricula by a combination of circumstances: for example, where demand for traditional courses is still strong and any innovative capacity is expended on YTS development, special attention to the unemployed adult may be inhibited. In addition, external initiatives and funding often relate to full-time provision only, though Education Support Grants and REPLAN projects now make special provision for the unemployed (see para. 84).

'Infilling' of claimant students can therefore serve to disguise the decline in traditional day-release courses and encouraging it can, paradoxically, discourage development.

Exploiting other funds

61. Funds do exist, however, which can be exploited creatively to provide a basis for more active curricular development. In some LEAs there is a conscious decision to benefit from every opportunity for specific funding, from Section 11 (Local Government Act 1966) provision for ethnic minorities, through to the Urban Programme and the European Social Fund, plus other small-scale programmes such as the Industrial Language Training Service (which provides language training for ethnic minorities both employed and unemployed).

62. A good example of the use of disparate sources of finance is Bradford Unemployment Unit, which co-ordinates use of MSC, EEC, Urban Programme and rate-borne monies for a range of education/training activities. The Unit is responsible to the Education Services Department and Committee, has a net

budget of about £2 million, and co-ordinates expenditure totalling about five times that amount. One of the attractive characteristics of the Bradford scheme is explicit liaison with, and help given to, voluntary sector bodies which aim to help disadvantaged and ethnic minority groups get a foot on the education/training ladder, or to establish commercial activities.

Testing demand

63. A useful tactic used by some colleges is to concentrate additional funding and recruitment efforts on a small number of courses in which the college has acknowledged expertise. This is a way of testing demand for, and encouraging, claimant attendance, especially that by specific groups. Examples include women returning to study after a period of caring for a family, or specialist provision for ESL students.

Using part-time staff

64. The employment of part-time staff with appropriate skills in special needs or basic education not represented among the full-time staff is often necessary in providing for claimants. This may be more efficient and effective than making new demands on the existing staff for which they are ill-prepared. Local authority and trade union support is more likely to be achieved if it can be demonstrated that such learning needs are of a high social and educational priority.

65. It may also be possible to use people without formal qualifications as personal or group tutors under the Voluntary Projects Programme (VPP). Instructors may be paid in accordance with established pay and conditions for temporary part-time teachers and should be open to union recruitment.

Conditions of service

66. It is important to recognise, however, that providing for the unemployed can carry some additional costs. Most claimant study is Category V work (under the Burnham system which grades work according to academic level). A majority of staff will therefore be Lecturer 1 grades (or part-timers) whose remission from teaching duties is usually the least of all teaching grades. LEAs should therefore be asked to consider whether counselling duties could be included in 'class-contact' hours. A successful argument might relate to the fact that counselling is essentially a curricular activity and cannot logically be separated from 'teaching' work.

67. Time will also be required for staff to build up inter-agency links and develop the counselling potential of the college. Team meetings are in practice attended by part-timers in their own time, but allowances must be made for the full development of such contact by granting remission from teaching hours for full-time staff specifically for this purpose.

MSC schemes

68. As MSC schemes provide more work-related non-advanced FE courses, it will become important for the FE service to demonstrate that adequate staffing is essential for high quality education/training, and that it is best placed to make that provision. In particular the provision of new courses, available to the unemployed, can only be successfully achieved if there is a firm commitment to the provision of adequate numbers of staff for teaching and counselling purposes.

69. The provision of appropriate curricula for the unemployed has in recent years been assisted by the creation of specific funding for a variety of sources for such provision.¹

70. Although the Adult Training Strategy (ATS) is designed principally to improve access to training and retraining for adults in employment, there will nevertheless be some funds available via the MSC for priority work with the unemployed and disadvantaged. In 1984-5, 72,000 disabled people were placed in employment and specific funds were also provided for work with ethnic minorities in areas of high unemployment.

71. Although the proportion of unemployed people on MSC supported schemes is expected to decline as adult training increases, it is nevertheless predicted by the MSC that there will be an increase from 80,000 to 125,000 following the introduction of the Adult Training Strategy.

72. The MSC will continue to provide some occupationally specific training courses (similar to TOPS courses for which attenders receive an allowance). However, to achieve the new number of places, they will provide more short courses, e.g. there will be an increase in Adult Preparation and Foundation Training. Providers of these new courses (managing agents or other contractors) will ensure that the provision stays within the rules of claimant attendance. In other words, these courses will be developed to be incorporated in the 12 and 21 hour rules and attenders will be benefit receivers.

MSC and infill

73. Where colleges are acting as managing agents or part-providers for MSC fees-only Adult Preparation Training (APT), then opportunities for infill will occur. APT may well be judged on placement rates into jobs. It is likely to be offered to people with a reasonable chance of employment, and infill may therefore not be appropriate where the infilled unemployed people are, for example, long-term unemployed who may need careful support and basic skill training. However, flexible, modular ways of meeting the needs of APT could prove a

¹ See *Sources of Finance for FE* — FEU project RP299

useful test-bed for provision for the long-term unemployed, especially as MSC funding is relatively assured.

74. One benefit of the use of 21 hour claimant study as a 'proxy' training allowance is that MSC office staff could well be incorporated into a liaison network including DHSS staff. DHSS and MSC staff should, if possible, be engaged by the college in positive consultation on the best way to make educational needs and benefit entitlement compatible.

Using MSC provision - some examples

75. In one county where policy has recently determined that all new FE courses should be self-financing, MSC-funded provision has been used to initiate new courses and save existing courses. One college used existing courses as the basis for such provision. In effect, adult training income from the MSC helped 'save' specialist provision which would otherwise have been at risk from LEA-wide economies.

76. Another college in the same county piloted an Adult Preparation Training Scheme in its General Studies Department. It offered ten-week blocks of a mixture of modules, each of three hours or so per week. They included 'Job Getting Skills', 'Information Technology and Computer Literacy', 'Self-Employment', 'Communication and Numeracy', plus three 'Vocational Skills refresher options' to be chosen from fourteen. The course provided for thirty people having English as a second language, which is an area of college expertise. Access to the course was continuous and participants were encouraged to practise job seeking while on the course and to accept a suitable job if one was offered.

77. For this second course the college acted as 'managing agent', buying in specialist tuition where possible. The MSC paid tuition at the TOPS hourly rate plus the cost of co-ordinating staff. The maximum attendance for any individual was 21 hours per week so claimants retained entitlement to supplementary benefit. The principles of flexible access, continuous counselling, work-related learning, a concentration on vocational skills judged relevant to local employment opportunities, the modular design and training towards accepted and tested standards (even within self-contained modules) were paramount. These principles are likely to apply to all courses which are MSC-funded.

Attractions and dangers

78. Participation in adult basic 21 hour training, with the MSC paying fees, has obvious attractions and dangers to LEAs and individual colleges. These are analogous to those associated with participation in YTS:

- a) At least some income is generated, which may be used to maintain existing provision. This is attractive where the LEA has a commitment to reducing or waiving fees for unemployed people. The fee income is, therefore, in effect, a real net gain, but there is no guarantee that the income will continue to be forthcoming. The courses for which the MSC is willing to pay have features which are worth applying to other areas of college provision, for example, their modular structure and 'roll-on, roll-off' method of enrolment. Thus the general influence on the institution of MSC courses can be helpful to the unemployed.
- b) On the other hand, MSC-supported provision could radically alter provision as a whole, for example by diverting rate-borne resources away from other groups of adults. The MSC prefers that courses be judged on job placement rates and it is likely, therefore, that places will tend to be offered to the more 'employable'. But it is those older unemployed adults who tend to be less employable whose needs will be less likely to be met in these circumstances.

79. Participation in MSC-funded provision will be a decision made on a mixture of political and financial criteria. As the MSC is particularly concerned with value for money, private sector manpower agencies will be major competitors for ATS funds. There is no guarantee that these groups will make local provision.

Meeting MSC criteria

80. It is important, therefore, that FE colleges show that they can meet the criteria necessary to receive MSC funding of adult courses. This will entail providing courses which give value for money, for example those which contain some paying students and students who will become highly employable. If FE colleges ensure that they can set these up and receive funding, they will also be able to combine funding from different areas and provide courses which are open to the young as well as to the adult unemployed, and to the disadvantaged as well as the more potentially employable. In order to achieve recognition of their right to such external funding, FE colleges will need to demonstrate adaptability to the MSC's developing criteria in the first place.

REPLAN and PICKUP - DES initiatives

81. Specific funds have been provided by the DES to promote educational provision for the unemployed in the REPLAN scheme. The funds are distributed through the Further Education Unit for projects involving curriculum development and through the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education¹ for

1. NIACE, 19b de Montfort Street, Leicester, LE1 7GE.

innovative projects expanding provision for the unemployed. Some of the schemes funded have been in colleges of further education. Other funds to support work with the unemployed have been available from the DES in the past two years in the form of Education Support Grants.

82. Application for public funds has to be subject to scrutiny and it may be a time-consuming process, but staff at the FEU and the REPLAN Field Officers working for the National Institute are available to provide help and advice. In addition, PICKUP Regional Development Agents may advise on PICKUP schemes which, although concerned mainly with professional updating of those in employment, may provide opportunities for the unemployed. The names of these contacts are provided in Appendix D.

SECTION IV CONCLUSIONS

83. It is possible to encourage and assist young people and adults who are unemployed to learn in FE institutions without loss of benefit. LEAs, their colleges and adult education institutions should regard those who are unemployed as an important clientele (paras 1-9). The basic curricular provision and development are suggested (paras. 10-11, Figure 1).

84. Identification of need is a primary curriculum planning process which has a particular importance in the case of the unemployed. A feature of such needs analysis must be consultation with the clients themselves (paras. 12-15).

85. In addition, methods of delivery need to be as flexible as possible. A wide range of outlets (by teaming up with other providers in the statutory and voluntary sectors), a variety of methods and times of enrolment and a breakdown of programmes into constituent or modular parts should be aimed for. Non-standard modes of learning should also be available: self-study, open learning and/or interactive methods making use of computer technology are examples (paras. 16-27).

86. The promotion of programmes for the unemployed also needs special attention. Publicity should be targeted both in terms of venue (benefit office?) and type (specially designed leaflets). College brochures can be impenetrable for the inexperienced or poorly motivated (paras. 28-34).

87. Although access via infill to existing opportunities is of value, specifically designed programmes are also necessary. In particular, strategies for initial guidance and continuing support should be planned (paras. 35-39, 43-49 and *passim*).

88. Although vocational needs are primary for the unemployed, the necessity for a balanced curriculum should be recognised. The development of personal skills and leisure interests may be crucial in maintaining self-respect during a period of unemployment and may assist in maintaining employability during such times (paras. 40-42 and 50-57).

89. Although specific funding from external sources may be considered to be inherently unstable, some authorities and colleges have achieved considerable continuity in provision funded from such sources by exploiting all possible sources of finance or by concentrating efforts on particular kinds of provision (paras. 70-83).

90. Resourcing provision for the unemployed is, however, not easy and, although infill provides a simple and relatively cost-free option, specially de-

signed provision should also be made and this must be accompanied by appropriate commitment to guidance, special teaching skills and equipment. Fee concessions are also vital as normal college fees are incompatible with levels of benefit (paras. 35-39, 58-65, 69-85 and *passim*).

91. Finally it is of central importance that college staff should be familiar with DHSS regulations which do enable learning to be undertaken by unemployed people provided concessions are made by curriculum planners. Advice contained in Appendices A and B, although directed at the unemployed themselves, should also be essential reading for all college staff in positions of authority over the curriculum. Provided such commitment is made by teachers, there should be few obstacles to valuable programmes of continuing education and training for most unemployed people seeking further opportunities in life and work (Appendices A and B).

APPENDIX A

THE BENEFIT RULES

This Appendix contains a basic explanation of the benefit system. It is phrased as an example of the kind of guidance that staff could give to those claimants unclear about their rights and obligations. It may also be useful for staff who are themselves unclear about unemployment and supplementary benefit. There are four sections referring to:

- 1) The difference between unemployment benefit and supplementary benefit.
- 2) How and when to claim benefit.
- 3) Leaving and refusing a job.
- 4) How to appeal or get a review.

It is important that FE staff should familiarise themselves with the regulations, and keep up to date with any changes, as course design and the continuing attendance of students may crucially depend on a clear knowledge of what is possible under the regulations. Liaison with the MSC and DHSS is also of great importance particularly as the MSC may act as an ally to the college and students in negotiation with the DHSS over interpretation.

1. Unemployment benefit or supplementary benefit?

This section explains the difference between unemployment benefit and supplementary benefit. If you are not sure which benefit you get, the letter you received when you first claimed should tell you.

Unemployment benefit

Unemployment benefit is £30.45 a week at present. It is paid fortnightly. You can get extra if you have an adult dependant, such as a wife or other partner. If you have children, you get child benefit in the normal way.

To get unemployment benefit you must have been working for someone for a while and have paid your National Insurance contributions. You must also be 'available for employment'. You can only get unemployment benefit for a year.

If you cannot get unemployment benefit then you can usually claim supplementary benefit. If you get unemployment benefit but it is not as much as you could get on supplementary benefit then you can claim some supplementary benefit on top.

Supplementary benefit

Supplementary benefit is money you get if you do not have enough income to live on. For people under 60 it is called 'supplementary allowance'.

At 16 or 17 a young person living with his or her parents gets £18.20 a week. At 18 or more you get £23.60. If you have children or live in your own place then you get more. It is usually paid fortnightly if you are unemployed.

Young people normally get supplementary benefit when they are unemployed and cannot get any unemployment benefit. You do not need to have worked or paid any National Insurance contributions to get supplementary benefit.

You have to give details of where you live and about other income and your savings. If you have income of more than £4 a week, your supplementary benefit will normally be reduced. If you have savings of over £3,000 you will not be able to get any supplementary benefit. You are expected to use your savings to live on until you have no more than £3,000 left.

Couples

If you are married or living with a partner of the opposite sex, then only one of you can get supplementary benefit. The one who gets the benefit can claim extra for their partner. But that means you will have less money living together than living apart.

Men and women can live in the same house or flat independently and still keep their own supplementary benefit, but *not* if they live as a couple. So your living arrangements can affect how much you are paid. You should explain them carefully.

If you do live as a couple, you can sometimes choose which of you gets the supplementary benefit. This rule is new. In the past only the male partner could claim. If only one of you wants to study, it is better if the other partner claims the supplementary benefit. The one who does not claim is free to study as they like.

2. Claiming benefit

Leaving school or college

If you are under 20 and have been studying at school or college without getting benefit, then you may have to wait some time after you leave before you can get supplementary benefit.

There are only three days in the year when your money can start. These are Mondays around the *start* of the school terms, so you will not be able to get

supplementary benefit until near the start of the term *after* you leave school or college.

If you leave school during the summer term or at the end of it:
the first Monday in September.

If you leave school during the Christmas term (normally only possible in Scotland):
the first Monday in January.

If you leave school during the Easter term or at the end of it:
the first Monday after Easter Monday.

There is one exception to these rules. If you have your 19th birthday after you stopped going to school or college but before one of these Mondays, then you can get benefit from the Monday before your 19th birthday as long as the course and any exams are over.

You should approach the Unemployment Benefit Office at least a few days before this date to claim your benefit. Your supplementary benefit will start either on your own particular Monday or on a later day in that week. It is paid fortnightly.

Some people leave school well before their final exams, but the DHSS will not accept that you have actually left school until *after* you have taken your final exams. So if your exams are after Easter, you are counted as a Summer leaver *even if* you stopped attending school regularly well before Easter. However, in 1985 the rules were changed to allow anyone in this position to be counted as an Easter leaver if they had left school, were off the register and did not spend more than 12 hours taking exams in any one week.

If you feel you have been wrongly treated by the DHSS in the way the rules have been applied, it may be worth trying to get the decision changed. For advice on doing this see Section 4 of this Appendix. See Appendix D for people who may give you advice or help.

Keeping people informed

Once you start getting supplementary benefit for yourself, your parents will stop getting child benefit and any extra supplementary benefit or other social security benefit they got to help with your keep. So make sure they know what you are doing.

If you are 16 or 17 you will have to register at the careers office or local Jobcentres. People aged 18 or more do not have to register, but it is often a good idea. It helps to show you are really looking for a job.

3. Leaving or refusing a job

If you have a job and you leave it without a good reason then your unemployment benefit can be stopped for up to six weeks. There are very few reasons that are acceptable as 'good'. You cannot leave just because you do not like the job or find the journey to work difficult for example.

The same thing can happen if you turn down the offer of a suitable job or if you leave or turn down a place on the Youth Training Scheme or some other Government training scheme.

Your supplementary benefit will not be stopped, but it will be reduced by 40p in every £ for up to six weeks. That means a 16- or 17-year-old living at home will get only £10.90 a week and an older person will get £14.15 a week. This reduced rate lasts for up to six weeks. If your unemployment benefit is stopped, you will usually get the reduced rate of supplementary benefit instead.

Adjudication Officers

The people who decide about your benefit are called Adjudication Officers. Sometimes they may decide that a job is suitable when you think it is not. Or they may decide that you left one without a good reason even if you felt you had a perfectly good one. Of course, in many cases they may agree with you.

If the Adjudication Officer decides you have no intention at all of working, or of taking training, then even your supplementary benefit could be stopped altogether. It is very unusual for this to happen and you would get plenty of warning.

If your benefit is stopped or cut you can ask for the decision to be reviewed. Often it is worth appealing against the decision. There is some guidance on reviews and appeals in the following section. You should always get expert help before making an appeal. You could ask staff or members of the Students' Union at your college for help, or you could go to the local Law Centre, Citizens' Advice Bureau or Claimants Union. You could also ask for advice from your careers office or Jobcentre.

4. How to appeal or get a review

If you are not allowed benefit while you study or you disagree with the amount you are given, then you can have the decision checked.

If you think the officer who dealt with your case has made a mistake or not been fair or did not know something important, you can write to ask for your case to be reviewed. That usually means that another officer will check the decision to see if it is reasonable and correct.

You should write setting out your circumstances in more detail. You should also give any new information at this stage. It might help if you get the college where you are studying to read this leaflet and then to write explaining how many hours of study you are actually doing. You should keep a copy of any letter you write.

If you still do not get benefit or do not get enough, then you can appeal against the decision. You should *always* appeal if you think that a real mistake has been made. You should *always* get advice if you want to appeal. Go to a Law Centre or Citizens' Advice Bureau.

It is always important to be completely clear about why your benefit has been refused or cut. Ask for the decision in writing. This is called asking for a 'statement of reasons'. You should ask for this statement within 28 days of being told the amount of benefit you will get or being told that you are not going to be given any. You then have a further 28 days in which to appeal.

If you lose your appeal, you can sometimes make a further appeal to a higher level. You will definitely need expert advice to do this. See Appendix D for where to get further help.

APPENDIX B

THE BENEFIT RULES AS THEY RELATE TO STUDYING

This Appendix contains a basic explanation of the benefit system as it relates to studying. As with Appendix A, it is phrased as an example of guidance that staff could give to claimants. (It will, of course, be necessary to incorporate any changes which are made to the regulations). Again it might also explain the system clearly to staff who find the rules confusing. There are three sections referring to:

1. Availability for Work
2. Courses and Grants
3. Some Specific Problems Which May Require Advice

1. Availability for work

Benefit rules do not allow people who are mainly interested in studying rather than working to get social security money, so there is a rule to stop it happening.

To get supplementary benefit or unemployment benefit while you are studying you must always be able and willing to take a suitable full-time job at once if one is offered. That is called 'being available for employment'. If you are studying on a course that leads to exams and you intend to go into higher education, you may be told you are not 'available for work' because your main intention is to study. Some unemployed people may also be asked to show that they have put some effort into finding a job, even in parts of the country where jobs are very scarce. This extra test applies to people on unemployment benefit and in some cases to those on supplementary benefit.

However, these rules do not apply to some people at all. They do not have to be available for employment. For example, single parents can study at any level and still get social security money. Young people who do not live with their parents can study in some circumstances.

But most unemployed people who study must be willing to take a suitable job at any time.

Apart from being offered a job, you may be offered a training course such as the Youth Training Scheme or a TOPS (Training Opportunities) course. You can refuse to take one of these courses if it is offered to you. However, you may find your benefit will be stopped or reduced for up to six weeks. YTS and

TOPS schemes should by law provide a 'reasonable opportunity of training'. If you think that the scheme you are offered does not meet these requirements, make it clear why you refused it. Then if your benefit is cut you could appeal. (See Section 4 in Appendix A).

Studying on unemployment benefit

If you get unemployment benefit the rules about studying are fairly simple. If you get supplementary benefit they are more complicated. If you are not sure that which benefit you get, look at the previous Appendix.

To study on unemployment benefit, you must be willing to take a suitable full-time job if you are offered one. You must also be prepared to put some time into finding one. That means that you normally cannot do a course that is called full-time. And it means that you cannot normally be a student doing a degree course or something similar. If you were a student then you would not be 'available for employment'. If you are studying full-time on a course like this then you should consider applying for a grant.

You may find that staff at the local Unemployment Benefit Office wrongly apply some of the rules to you that really apply to people on supplementary benefit. They should not do this. If you get unemployment benefit, the only rule for you is that you are available for employment.

Studying on supplementary benefit

The rules about studying on supplementary benefit are more complicated but two basic rules apply to just about everyone. You *must be available for employment*. This rule is exactly the same as the one applied to someone on unemployment benefit. The rule is described above.

You *must not* be a full-time student. The rule about being a full-time student is more strict than for people on unemployment benefit. If you are doing a full-time degree course or a teaching course or something at a similar level which the college says is full-time, then you will not normally be able to get supplementary benefit. If your college says that your course is not full-time, you should be able to get benefit.

You must also fit in with other rules which may be different for different age groups. Some of the rules change when you have been getting benefit for three months. These rules are now explained.

(i) In the first three months

In the first three months on supplementary benefit the rules that apply are more strict than those that apply after three months. They are different for different

age groups. But the general rules about being willing to take a suitable job and not being a full-time student always apply. You might have to show that you are prepared to put some time into looking for a job.

16, 17, or 18 years old

People aged 16, 17 or 18 must usually study for 12 hours a week or less in order to get supplementary benefit. You only count hours of supervised study at college during the day. Section III on page 32 explains in more detail what hours to count. This kind of study could be something like a City and Guilds or an 'O' level GCE. It must not be above 'A' level GCE standard.

[This rule changed in August 1984. The limit used to be 15 hours a week but it included homework.]

Someone of this age studying on a course *above* 'A' level standard, such as a degree, is *not* restricted by the 12 hour limit. Instead, their course must not be called full-time by the college. This rule is the same as the rule that applies to older people described below.

In either case you must also be available for employment and not be a full-time student, as explained above.

People aged 20 or more

People aged 20 or more do not have to worry about the 12 hour limit. Instead, your course must not be called full-time by the college. If it is called full-time then that makes you into a full-time student and you cannot get benefit. This rule applies to courses at any level not just those at degree level.

You must also be available for employment as explained above.

19-year-olds

Most 19-year-olds are treated like 20-year-olds in these rules. So they do not have to worry about the 12 hour limit. But some younger 19-year-olds may be treated like people aged 16 to 18.

If your 19th birthday is after the start of the September term and you have been studying at 'A' level standard or below for the whole of the previous two years, then you will be counted with the 18-year-olds. Otherwise you will be counted with the 20-year-olds. You will also be counted with them if you have signed on for work at any time in that period.

(ii) After three months

When you have been on benefit for three months the rules become a bit easier.

You can do a course for up to 21 hours a week and still get supplementary benefit.

You must still be willing to take a suitable job. That means that you must be ready to leave the course right away. You and the college may have to sign a form saying you are willing to leave for a job at any time. But you do not have to make any particular effort to find one.

If you want to carry on with a course under the rules that apply in the first three months then you can do so whatever your age. But if you do, then you may have to search for work more actively.

You can count time spent claiming some other benefits as part of the three months. You can count the time spent on unemployment benefit and sickness benefit. And you can even count the days when you get sick pay from your employer. And if you have been getting any of them for a total of three months any time in the last six months and you have worked for the rest of the time, that counts too.

You can also count time spent on the Youth Training Scheme as part of the three months. But you can only count time on the scheme if it was after the date when you could have started to claim supplementary benefit as a school-leaver. We explain these dates on pages 24-25.

As before, the rules are different for different age groups.

16, 17, or 18 years old

Once you have been on benefit for three months, you can start studying for as much as 21 hours a week. If you have started on a course of 12 hours or less, you cannot just extend your hours on the same course. You must do a course which is at least a bit different from the one you did in the first three months. It could include different subjects or extra subjects. It could be for a different exam or at a different college or school.

Of course you can carry on studying on the same course for up to 12 hours a week for as long as you like. But if you want to increase your hours to take advantage of the 21 hour limit, then you must change courses.

If you want to change courses, always talk it over with your teachers. Colleges or schools may sometimes help by putting on special courses you can do for the first three months. Then you can fit into a different course for 21 hours a week afterwards.

Remember that your course must not be full-time if it is at degree level or something similar. And remember you must give up your course if a job comes up.

People aged 20 or more

People aged 20 or over can also study for as much as 21 hours a week after they have been on benefit for three months. But if you have been doing a course in the first three months, you cannot just change your hours. You must do a course which is at least a bit different from the one you did in the first three months for it to be counted under the 21 hour rule. It could include different subjects or extra subjects. It could be for a different exam or at a different college.

If you do want to change courses, always talk it over with your tutors. Colleges may sometimes help by putting on special courses, which are not full-time and which you can do for the first three months linking with a course you can do for 21 hours later on.

However, if you do not want to change your hours or your course even though the rules now allow you to study up to 21 hours, then you can carry on with the same course that you did in the first three months without any problems.

Remember that your course still must not be called full-time. And remember you must give up your course if a job comes up.

19-year-olds

If you are 19 you will have to work out whether you are counted with the 20-year-olds or with the younger people. How to do this is explained on page 30.

(iii) Counting up your 12 or 21 hours study

When you work out whether your course is 12 hours or less or 21 hours or less, there are rules about which hours you count and which you do not.

YOU DO COUNT all classes, practical lessons and exams which are part of the course where a teacher or other member of staff is teaching or at least in charge of you. This is called supervised study. You must also count any project or exercise that is part of the course.

YOU DO NOT COUNT homework, classes you do without a teacher or member of staff in charge, classes which are not part of your course, meal breaks, or travelling time. Nor do you count any time doing other things which are not part of your studies such as part-time work.

The rule was different until recently. In the first three months, the time limit was 15 hours and included homework. Since August 1984 it does not include homework.

If you are doing evening classes and they are part of a course you do during the day as well, then they *might* be counted in. But if the course is *only* evening classes they *will not* be counted in.

So if you want to do evening classes, it is sensible to do ones that are *not* part of the same course you do in the day. For example, they may be for an exam in a different subject.

If you are not sure which activities are part of your course and which are not, ask your teacher or supervisor. The hours you count should be the hours you actually do. If you want to do fewer hours than you are supposed to for the course, you should ask your tutor to agree to this in writing.

People who do not have to be available for work

These rules apply to most people who want to study while they get benefit. However, there are some groups who can study and get benefit without worrying about them.

Some people do not have to be available for work at all to get benefit. They include single parents with a dependent child living with them, the over-60s, some women over 50 who have not worked for ten years, and some very disabled or sick people and, sometimes, the people who have to look after them. You do not have to be available for work while you are on an Open University residential course.

If you think you may be in one of these groups who do not have to be available for work, you should get advice. See Appendix D.

16, 17, and 18 years old

Apart from the people who do not have to register for work at all, some people under 19 can do a school or college course up to 'A' level standard and not have to be available for work. You will be one of them if:

- * You are yourself a parent and your child lives with you.
- * You are severely handicapped and because of that there is not much chance of your getting a job in the next twelve months if you leave school or college.
- * You have split up with your parents and do not live with them because you cannot get on with them or they cannot get on with you. This is called being estranged. You can also be estranged from other adults who had looked after you as a parent.
- * Your parents are dead and you have no-one looking after you in the way that parents would.

If you are in local authority care, then you are treated as if you are living with your parents.

Handicapped and disabled people

The rules for handicapped and disabled people are particularly complicated. So it is especially important for you to get advice if you think you may be in this category. Often it is easier for you than for other people to do full-time study and still get supplementary benefit without being available for work.

You should also find out whether there is any other benefit you can get because of your disability. Since November 1984 there has been a new benefit called severe disablement allowance with special rules for the under 20s.

If you think you might be eligible you should get advice. See Appendix D.

2. Courses and grants

Courses for unemployed people claiming benefit

Unemployed people claiming benefit can do any kind of course as long as they stick to the rules outlined above. Some of the courses you can do will lead to exams. But remember that you might have to show you are more interested in getting a job than staying on the course to do the exam.

Always try to talk things over with the staff at the college or school before you start a course. Explain that you are going to be unemployed and claiming benefit. It is especially important to do so if you want to go to a school or sixth form college. They have other rules about who they take and may have to make special arrangements for you.

Help for unemployed people

Some education authorities or colleges will offer particular help to the unemployed to do some study. They may do so by:

- * making your timetable flexible to fit in with what you want to do and the times you can attend (sometimes this is called 'flexistudy' or open learning);
- * allowing you to do parts of a course, even one that is normally called full-time, so you can fit in with the rules. The parts are often called 'modules';

- * not charging tuition fees, or charging less, to unemployed people. In some areas you can also get help with meals or travel costs and there may be a creche to look after a child if you have one;
- * providing special courses that fit in with the rules for people in particular groups. For example, they may have courses for mothers who had their babies in their teens, people whose first language is not English, people who want to start a business or a co-op, or women who want to do jobs that are usually done by men.

In some areas adults who need training in basic skills for work such as welding or information technology can do a college course while getting social security benefit. You would have to be willing to leave the course if a suitable job came up. Ask at your local Jobcentre or careers office if there are courses like this in your area.

Grants for full-time study

As long as you stick to the rules, you should be able to combine study with getting benefit. But if you prefer to concentrate on your studies and not be available for work, then you will not be able to get supplementary benefit or unemployment benefit, at least not during the term.

School or college

In some areas, people under 19 can stay on at school and get a small grant called an educational maintenance allowance. It is usually only a few pounds and in most areas it would be paid to your parents.

If you go to college you may be able to get a grant to help you live while you study. Grants are not always easy or possible to get, especially for doing things like City and Guilds or 'A' levels at college. If you want to do a degree or similar course you have more chance of getting a grant.

You should get advice from your local careers office, your local education office or the local Student Union at your college. See Appendix D for useful addresses.

Parents

Remember, if you are under 19 and at school or college and you do not get supplementary benefit, your parents should be able to get child benefit of £7.00 a week. Parents may also get extra amounts on your account with other social security benefits. So if you want to try to get supplementary benefit on your own using the information given here, talk it over with your parents. It may affect how much benefit they get.

3. Some specific problems which may require advice

It is important that FE staff do not automatically associate claimant study with vocational or pre-vocational aspirations. Although most claimant students are likely to perceive their studies as an opportunity to increase their chances of getting a job, this will not always be so. The range of *aspirations* is likely to be not much different from that encountered in non-claimants.

Specific problems requiring advice include:

- ignorance of the detail of the availability and 21 hour rules and of the benefit system generally;
- confusion between benefit and LEA discretionary support;
- lack of discussion with parents (some of whom, for example, might have continued to claim child benefit for some weeks after a young person had tried to claim supplementary benefit);
- anxiety about money;
- lack of knowledge of the implications of transfer from full-time to part-time attendance.

The availability rule

FE staff can help by reminding claimant students to take sensible steps to make sure they can show that they are available for work and also that they are not voluntarily unemployed. These include:

- Registering with the careers service or Jobcentre. People aged 16 and 17 have to register if they wish to go on to claim unemployment and/or supplementary benefit. Those aged 18 and over do not have to in order to claim benefit, but should be advised to do so.
- Keeping copies of letters of application for jobs, and keeping rejection slips where they have been sent.
- Keeping a note of other ways in which they have tried to get work (a 'Job-search' file can be maintained by the claimant student).
- Always telling the referral agency (careers, Jobcentre) and the people in charge of any job or training scheme of any good reason the claimant has for turning down or leaving a place in that job or training scheme. This is best done in writing and again copies of letters should be kept.

Work experience

Many colleges regard work experience as a very important part of a course. Where such experience constitutes a formal part of any course, it should be possible to have it counted as 'supervised study'. Counsellors or tutors may, however, be able to give students advice about how to gain informal work experience outside course designated study. It is important that students remain 'available for work' if they do take part in work experience. The college should ensure that the position is clear about how any work experience will be regarded by the DHSS in order to prevent individual students from having benefit stopped if confusion arises.

Liaison with outside agencies

One of the best ways to help claimant students is to build up good relations with the DHSS. Their staff could be invited into the college to explain rules and provide guidance for claimants and teachers alike. The MSC may also provide valuable support.

The DHSS

In one college visited, DHSS staff had been included in an informal network of advice agencies which also included the college student counsellor, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, a Welfare Rights Shop and the Careers Service. The local education authority often has advisory staff who can give guidance.

The DHSS has a network of Regional Information Officers (RIOs); this network is an extremely valuable resource. The advantages of contact with the RIOs is that they are usually not involved in deciding individual claims. Discussion can then concentrate on clarifying what the local practice is with regard to claims from unemployed FE attenders, without involvement in wrangles over individual cases. RIOs can be asked to come, or send staff, to talk to claimant attenders in the college. Clearly, this can be delicate where students are in dispute with the DHSS over their individual claims; one way round this is to ensure that DHSS staff are invited from an office located outside the catchment area of the college. Principles can then be talked about, without risks of embarrassing breaches of confidentiality.

In another group of colleges, an excellent network of college and voluntary sector counsellors existed. However, the DHSS locally was seen (with evidence substantiated in discussion with claimants) as unduly harsh in its interpretation of the rules. Where relationships between college or outside advisory staff and the local DHSS have become soured, for whatever reason, then it is advised that contact be between senior college or LEA staff, and the RIO or Office Manager. Again, the grounds are that sensible elucidation of local DHSS policy

and practice may be possible where neither the education service nor the DHSS representative is actually embroiled in dispute over individual cases.

What is a full-time course?

There are no strict rules about what constitutes a 'full-time' course. Senior college academic planners may be able to use their judgement when deciding on the status of a course which could be expected to attract unemployed claimant students. Although designation of a course as 'part-time' has implications for Burnham, and usually for staffing purposes, a 'part-time' designation could be extremely useful in attracting older claimant students.

The DES and DHSS have agreed that a course consisting of components of 'full-time' courses will probably be acceptable as 'part-time', as long as the 'hybrid' is itself designated part-time. This is stated in an Administrative Memorandum from DES (3/84), and is in the guidance which goes to the DHSS staff from the Chief Adjudication Officer, in the form of amendments to the publicly available 'S'-Manual of guidance.

The issue of course designation is a live one for claimants aged 19 or over. Many older, longer term unemployed people likely to be eligible to use the 21 hour rule risk being disbarred from supplementary benefit as 'students' if courses are designated 'full-time' (some 'full-time' courses involve less than 21 hours supervised study).

Legally speaking, course designation is irrelevant for claimants studying under the new 12 hour ruling. Young people can start a course in September and claim benefit as being available for employment whatever their course designation, as long as it constitutes less than 12 hours supervised study per week.

Transfer to a 21 hour course after the three month qualifying period would make educational sense and meet DHSS requirements for a genuinely 'fresh' course.

APPENDIX C

EXAMPLES OF PROVISION

This Appendix examines some of the ways in which different colleges have made provision for unemployed students. Aspects of these examples could provide a basis for 'good practice' for colleges with similar needs and structures.

Example 1: Claimant study on existing courses

For many colleges extreme constraints on time and money lead to a belief that it is not possible to provide places for the unemployed even if the desire to do so is there. However, many claimants can easily be accommodated on courses already set up in a college if the curriculum is organised with this in mind. This requires a minimal financial commitment.

Using existing courses

A college has provided places for nearly 800 unemployed people without making any substantial alteration to its curriculum. Claimants are channelled on to existing courses by the college counselling service. It is possible to waive fees, offer the first sitting of an examination free and help a little with travelling expenses for these 'infill' students, at a relatively low cost to the local education authority. The infill strategy does not require a large capital outlay, but it can accommodate large numbers of claimants.

The college has discovered that 'infill' on existing 'O' and 'A' level courses is extremely popular. Claimants can take two or three 'O' levels, one 'A' level and one or two 'O' levels or one or two BTEC courses and still remain within the 21 hour ruling. From these it may be possible to apply in some local authorities for 'traineeships' on standard discretionary awards at the end of each academic year and move to a full-time course, after having achieved the necessary background qualifications on 21 and 12 hour study.

The main aim of the college is to allow flexibility in its existing course structure and deliberately to channel claimants on to courses which unambiguously respect DHSS limits. The burden of counselling time which would fall to course tutors has been removed by developing the existing college counselling service. Careful organisation of this body has geared it towards providing the maximum help to people willing to study while unemployed.

Developing a guidance service

The student support services have been unified in an on-site unit. As the college is large, regular 'surgeries' are held in different places to deal with welfare problems. The unit contains welfare rights and careers service expertise and is soon to be joined by a worker from the Community Programme.

One problem is to reach students who attend the college only on evening courses or on one afternoon a week. It is often just such people attending part-time who run into problems with courses, and they are the least accessible to college advice. If they get into difficulties with the DHSS they may leave the course rather than jeopardise their benefit. But, if they can be given the support of a guidance service, they can become aware of their rights, be represented by the college to the DHSS and generally given a feeling of security about what they are doing. The college unit has made its opening times as wide as possible to contact these people. Community liaison officers try to establish links between claimants and the college if the unit is unsuccessful in reaching them.

The majority of queries which the unit deals with concern problems with money. They keep copies of all DHSS, housing and tax leaflets on site, together with an excellent leaflet produced by a local law centre about studying while unemployed.

Liaison with the DHSS

The unit is involved in regular liaison with DHSS officers. It has arranged meetings between DHSS officers and the local education authority which have enabled policy makers from both to understand each others problems.

A regular 'Open Day' has been organised to which all local advice groups are invited. College curriculum possibilities are explained to these groups as a means of ensuring widespread dissemination of this knowledge.

Informal contacts with all areas of the social services have been developed by the unit and information is shared wherever possible. In another city we found that college counselling officers met on a regular basis to share knowledge and discover discrepancies in the response from local DHSS offices. Where a college runs into problems with one particular office the issue can be taken up with Head Office. Considerable strength is given to a college in these kind of negotiations when they have knowledge of differences of policy within the DHSS, on the same issue. Regular counselling meetings provide this knowledge.

The 'availability for work' rule

When the DHSS queried the 'availability for work' of some claimants on courses, it was possible to point out that some daytime courses had parallel eve-

ning equivalents. With this kind of system it was possible to argue that if any claimant was offered a job they could easily complete their course on an evening basis.

Counting the hours

Liaison with the DHSS has meant that working agreements have been reached about common grey areas of DHSS rules. The unit's counsellor has achieved recognition that evening classes need not be included in the 12 or 21 hour allowance; similarly lunchtimes spent in the college and hours spent at home on private, unsupervised study are not included. Again it is useful to check what agreement neighbouring colleges have reached over these issues. Good DHSS liaison and discussion is, however, in the end, a far more effective way of reaching agreement than complaining to Head Office about a local decision. This second strategy should only be used as a last resort.

A provisional timetable

The college has found that if students take a provisional timetable of their intended courses to the DHSS office shortly after enrolment, potential problems will quickly come to light. These can be sorted out before courses are under way. This prevents students having to abandon courses in mid-term when benefit is stopped in a case queried by the DHSS.

This provisional timetable system is used by several colleges we spoke to. Another strategy is to produce a written statement signed by claimant and tutor alike which declares that the allowed number of hours is not being exceeded. When a college initially begins accepting claimants on its courses it will find that one of these strategies may have to be adopted to allay DHSS fears about what they are doing. Once good relations have developed and college policy is understood these documents may no longer prove to be necessary.

Conclusion

This college has provided a considerable number of claimants with courses within its existing curriculum. With the help of extremely well organised guidance, some claimants can study for almost three full days without jeopardising their benefit. Because demand has far exceeded the existing provision, the local authority has commissioned a report to advise it on how best it can meet this demand. It must decide whether to allocate places to people who have already spent some time in further education or to people who have left school with no qualifications. The report should face the question of the relevance of infill GCEs to unemployed people and perhaps encourage a positive move towards developing courses which are more directly relevant. This will require new financial commitment.

The good guidance service that this college has developed has meant that new problems thrown up by this very changeable area of education can be met and dealt with more easily.

Example 2: Making courses relevant to the unemployed

The 'infill strategy' is relatively cheap. A college can provide a lot for the unemployed without making substantial changes in its curriculum. Infilling can also help combat falling rolls in a college. This can be a major problem in areas where declining industries lead to a drop in day-release students. However, where employment trends are changing, the traditional courses offered by a college may no longer be useful or interesting. The college is faced with the problem of trying to meet new needs.

The college discussed in this example overcame this problem by a process of active consultation with local youth. The college had been providing places for the unemployed on an infill basis but decided to develop its curriculum to meet their needs more specifically. With the help of the careers service, they identified all the young local unemployed people not eligible for a Government scheme and invited them into the college for a 'diagnostic workshop', which initially consisted of an introduction to car and motor cycle maintenance. Once in the college, advice was given about courses which could be followed under the 12 and 21 hour rulings. Those who attended the workshop were then asked what kind of courses they would like to see in the college.

From this consultation a system of 'modules' was developed with claimants' interests directly in mind. The college held further workshops aimed at attracting those interested in catering, hairdressing and care programmes. Learning modules were developed in these areas also.

The three day workshops began with a half-day introduction to the college, followed by a period of 'self-assessment' when students discussed their needs. Taster courses, e.g. in soft furnishings, car body engineering and electronics, were offered which were aimed at encouraging people to take qualifications in similar subjects under the 12 and 21 hour rule. The workshops gave the college some idea of the type of courses which would prove to be most popular.

Promotion

The college publicised its new range of courses in the local press and in Jobcentres and libraries. Other colleges have attracted significant numbers of people on to courses under the 12 and 21 hour ruling by producing leaflets

which advertise relevant courses. Local broadcasting offers an alternative channel for getting this kind of information across. The idea of an interesting and attractive 'workshop', however, seems to be the most innovative and successful way of attracting people into the college and finding out exactly what their needs are.

Providing continuity

The college also decided to try and integrate time spent studying under the 12 and 21 hour rules with years spent on Government schemes. It is trying to help the unemployed develop their own 'handmade packages' of study, training and work experience in the same way as structured sandwich courses are available to students in full-time higher education.

The college tries to guide people from one scheme to another by contacting them while they are on a scheme and suggesting ways in which their experience could be built on. This helps remove the 'doldrum period' faced when a scheme is finished. Youngsters of 17+ who complete a YTS scheme are particularly prone to this period of enforced inactivity.

Over a period of two or three years, using a mixture of 12 and 21 hours study and Government schemes, a subject can be followed academically and practically, often with period of work experience as well. In an area where long-term unemployment is high, continuity of a subject through different schemes can help alleviate the psychological and social problems which exist.

Organisational problems

Where courses are set up following consultation, initial organisational problems may arise. This college found that it faced a slight drop in attendance during the change over from the old workshops (where machinery was becoming obsolete due to the changing employment structure) to the new car maintenance or hairdressing workshops. Numbers rose again once organisation was consolidated.

The need for advice

Difficulties arose when some DHSS officials became suspicious that students were exceeding the legal amount of hours. Benefit was stopped and people in this situation were forced to leave their course. The college has found though that, by representing the unemployed person, they were able to show the DHSS that studying did not exceed the limit and that the person was still 'available for work'. Such support, however, involves a lot of staff time. The college has therefore increased staff in these areas to lessen the burden of extra

advice and counselling which falls to the course tutors. The college's two aims of consultation and providing continuity of subject both entail a great deal of staff support. The LEA has recognised this need and allocated resources for the necessary staff.

Work experience

The college believes that work experience provides a vital part of any course of study. They have reached an agreement with the DHSS which allows this to be included in courses. Work experience time is included in the 12 or 21 hours, but it is recognised that people on such courses are still 'available for work'. There seem to be varying interpretations of the possibilities of work experience in 12 and 21 hour study courses. Developing active consultation with the DHSS appears to be the best way of arriving at some agreement.

External funding

Part of this college's provision was funded from the European Social Fund. This is money allocated on the basis of vocational courses already provided. This allowed the college to follow up ideas it had already begun to work on. They managed, however, to convert a system of traditional 'infill' provision into one of flexible and responsive courses in a relatively short time. The number of changes they were able to make over a year was quite phenomenal and very encouraging. Their methods of consultation and of trying to provide some kind of continuity in courses provide examples that could be followed by other colleges.

Example 3: The community college

To some people, the idea of courses designed solely for the unemployed is openly discriminatory. Understandably, some unemployed may well resent being offered a contracted version of a full-time course in order that they can comply with DHSS regulations. Providing courses open to many different sections of the population may be the most cost-effective solution to financial problems. If these courses can be designed to fit within the 12 and 21 hour rules initially, they can provide opportunities for unemployed people, on a limited budget. The problem is to design courses accessible to many different people.

Community education

The college in this example has developed a kind of course known as the '50-50' course. This is designed to provide a balanced and progressive course of education and training. It is arranged in such a way that anyone who may bene-

fit will be able to attend, regardless of their age, sex or employment status.

The assumption underlying the course is that the type of technical education and training previously reserved for motor vehicle mechanics, for example, should in fact be more widely available:

'A person may be taught the fundamental technology and basic skills of motor vehicle repair and maintenance, not only because he or she may be employed in the motor trade in some other category, such as semi-skilled, unskilled, clerical or administrative, or because a motor vehicle contains equipment and components which may also be found in a general engineering plant, or because he or she may become a van or lorry driver, or simply because he or she may own a car'

In other words many people can benefit from the type of technological education which the college knows how to supply.

The college also believes that mixed courses provide opportunities for a person to gain experience of working with others of different ages, sexes and background. They find that this kind of integration for the under 18s in particular is of more benefit than formal lectures on 'life and social skills'.

It is this mix of age and background that has proved to be one of the most attractive features of the course to staff and student alike. Students are well motivated and discipline problems in mixed age classes seem to be minimised.

Another, and by no means small, advantage of advertising such courses in the community and receiving new types of students in the college is that part-time day courses in danger of closing through lack of apprenticeships are now thriving again.

The initial '50-50' courses began in the Engineering Department but have become so well known that students have asked for similar types of courses for 'O' and 'A' level in the General Studies Department and in City and Guilds and BTEC qualifications in catering. Plans are under way to introduce this.

A simple solution

The '50-50' course is simply a conventional day-release course, in any subject, at any level, coupled with one full day of relevant skills training. The course originally took just under 15 hours a week and led to a City and Guilds Skills Testing Certificate and to a BTEC or City and Guilds qualifications (from the day-release part of the course). (12 and 21 hour courses have now begun on identical lines).

Second and third year qualifications can be followed in the same subject very easily as the '50-50' course can be applied to any qualification available on day-release.

RSA, 'O' and 'A' levels and CSE exams can easily be offered on a '50-50' basis without any syllabus changes. New courses relevant to local employment demands, e.g. information technology, could be made available on the same basis, if required. The college regularly consults those attending the courses about future possible improvements in the curriculum.

The courses are attended by the unemployed of all ages (including the retired), by fifth and sixth formers combining two days of technical training with three days of study at school, by YTS trainees requiring off-the-job training (allowing each training place to be used by two trainees, as days at work can be alternated with days at college) and is equivalent to an 18 week TOPS course for the mature unemployed. The traditional apprentices who originally filled such training programmes are now in a minority due to unemployment changes locally. The course is still directly relevant to these people as well, however.

An unemployed person can attend the '50-50' course until he or she finds employment or carry on with higher qualifications if not. YTS trainees can continue their education after the scheme, even if they are not offered an apprenticeship. If someone already on a course is offered an apprenticeship, the day-release part of the course could be continued easily. In addition, school-leavers could follow qualifications they have begun, if offered a YTS place. This removes the potential discontinuity faced in many different areas by the young unemployed in particular.

As the '50-50' courses are proving to be popular in schools, they attract students to stay on in the schools that provide them. This could enable schools to retain pupils normally lost at 16. Making attractive provision for this part of the population is one of the most difficult but important problems currently facing sixth forms.

Flexibility

It is possible to join a '50-50' course at any time during the term. Most technical courses are taught and when the tutor moves to a new subject, knowledge of what went before is not always necessary. This would not be the case in a maths or language course, but is certainly true of many other technical subjects. Flexibility in joining the course means that coincidence of unemployment, school-leaving and course beginning is not strictly necessary, except where achieving a qualification is the sole aim for taking a course.

The college has also discovered that few people realise that a 19-year-old who becomes unemployed does not have to study under the 12 hour rule for three months, but can study for the full 21 hours straight away. Publicity of facts such as these widens a course's practical, as opposed to theoretical, availability.

Publicity

The college used questionnaires to ask young people themselves where the most effective places to advertise were. They exploited all possible areas of publicity very effectively. Stories of individual successes on '50-50' courses, e.g. 'local girl finds job after attending car mechanic training courses', appear regularly in local newspapers. Word of mouth appears, however, to be the most effective form of local publicity.

The course organiser has attempted to gain support for the course from various bodies, e.g. the CBI, and to sell the idea in as flexible a way as possible. One suggestion is that a '50-50' course could be combined with 'job sharing' to increase the take-up.

Conclusion

The '50-50' course is a very simple idea. Although in a sense it is only an advanced form of infill, it is presented in such a way as to make it both accessible and popular. This presentation develops the very laudable idea of the college as a valuable community resource, available to people with many different needs. This in turn develops the acceptability and desirability of training and education at all stages of life, a view which will in the end help reduce the stigma of unemployment. If a college can achieve this in its approach, it is indeed providing the most valuable form of community education.

APPENDIX D

WHERE TO GET HELP AND ADVICE

The **Child Poverty Action Group** will give advice over the telephone on weekday afternoons from 2.00 to 3.00 on 01-405 5942 or 4517.

The **Further Education Unit** will give advice to colleges on how to provide flexible courses for unemployed people. Their address is Elizabeth House, York Road, London, SE1 7PH. Telephone 01-934 9000. Ask for Philip Barnard or Martin Johnson.

The **National Union of Students** deals with local Student Unions. Their head office is at 461 Holloway Road, London, N1. Telephone 01-272 8900.

Youthaid will give advice to young people and colleges about the rules affecting studying on the dole. Write to Youthaid, 9 Poland Street, London, W1V 3DG. Telephone advice can sometimes be given on 01-439 8523.

HANDICAPPED OR DISABLED

If you are handicapped or disabled or know someone who is you can get extra advice from:

- * The **disablement advisory or resettlement officers** at your local Jobcentre.
- * A local **Association for Disabled People**.
- * The local **social services** office of your council or social work office in Scotland.
- * The **National Bureau for Handicapped Students** at 336, Brixton Road, London SW9. They will give you information and advice especially on money problems. Telephone: 01-274 0565.
- * The **Disability Alliance**, 25 Denmark Street, London, WC2H 8NJ. Telephone: 01-240 0806. They will give advice, especially on social security.

USEFUL BOOKS

Many advice centres and colleges have written their own local guides to the opportunities for study while you are unemployed. Local advice is usually good because local people will know what is available near you. Try to get any local guide first.

Good general guides are:

National Welfare Benefits Handbook and *Rights Guide to Non-Means Tested Benefits*, both from the Child Poverty Action Group, 1 Macklin Street, London, WC2B 5NH. £3.00 each including postage.

The Penguin Guide to Supplementary Benefit by Tony Tyres. Available from bookshops (Early editions may not be up to date).

Leaving School — A Pocket Guide to Social Security. Leaflet FB20, free from DHSS offices.

Disability Rights Handbook. £2.00 from the Disability Alliance, 25 Denmark Street, London, WC2H 8NJ. Tel: 01-240 0806.

Useful Guides (see para. 33, p.8):

Newcastle: *The Pocket Survival Guide* from the Research Unit, Policy Services Department, Newcastle City Council, Civic Centre, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Manchester: *Education on the Dole* from South Manchester Law Centre, 595 Stockport Road, Longsight, Manchester.

Wolverhampton: *Guidance Leaflets for the Unemployed* from Civic Centre, Wolverhampton.

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South West
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Dorset, Gloucestershire,
Somerset and Wiltshire)

West Midlands
(Hereford & Worcester,
Shropshire,
Staffordshire,
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APPENDIX E

FEU GUIDANCE NOTE 3 (Amended October 1985)

Curriculum Implications of the 12/21 Hour Rules : Part-Time Education for the Unemployed

1. Introduction

1.1 Since the publication of the first edition of FEU Guidance Note 3 in March 1983, there has been increasing interest from the FE service in the potential benefits for both students and institutions in developing and adapting curricula for unemployed people of all ages who wish to study part-time whilst receiving unemployment or supplementary benefit.

1.2 A number of changes in the regulations and their interpretation have taken place since then and this note updates previous guidance, mainly in the light of the DES *Administrative Memorandum 3/84*, which revised *AM 2/82*. *AM 3/84* describes:

- i) an amendment to the regulations which enables YTS 'graduates' to move on to part-time study under the 21 hours rule without having to satisfy the usual qualifying period;
- ii) arrangements for simplifying the conditions which have to be satisfied for study during the qualifying period;
- iii) the development of the DES initiative for unemployed adults.

1.3 This Guidance Note seeks to help colleges (and others) engaged in providing education for unemployed people through:

- i) preventing unemployed people wishing to study part-time becoming disadvantaged in their benefits claims;
- ii) counselling those who enquire about opportunities for study;
- iii) designing a curriculum which is relevant and accessible.

2. Eligibility for benefit and course attendance

2.1 Unemployed people can study part-time for not more than 21 hours per week at colleges (or establishments such as adult institutes) whilst preserving their right to supplementary benefit (SB). Claimants of all ages must have completed a period of three months availability for work and be in receipt of unemployment benefit, sickness benefit or supplementary benefit before commencing their course. They must also demonstrate that they are 'available for employment' i.e. are willing to take a suitable full-time job if one is offered.

2.2 School-leavers (16- to 18-year-olds) do not become entitled to SB until the end of the holiday following their final term at school, so the qualifying period for them will start from the first Monday in September or after Easter. During the qualifying period, attendance on courses for up to 12 hours per week is possible (this represents a change from previous regulations which allowed up to 15 hours study a week *including* private study). After the qualifying period, eligibility depends on continuing to be readily available for employment. Unemployed school-leavers 16-17 years old *must* register at the local Manpower Services Commission Jobcentre or with the LEA Careers Office; older school-leavers may find it useful to register in order to demonstrate their availability for work. *Leaving School — A Pocket Guide to Social Security* (leaflet FB20) is published by DHSS and describes the workings of the 21 hours rule.

2.3 Youth Training Scheme 'graduates' who fail to find a job after completing a YTS scheme may immediately take advantage of the 21 hours rule without having to complete a qualifying period.

2.4 19-year-olds who have continued their education without a break and whose birthday falls after the start of September term are counted with 16- to 18-year-olds for the purposes of the qualifying period regulations.

2.5 Students in special categories, e.g. single parents with a dependent child living with them or severely handicapped people who, because of their disability, are unlikely to obtain employment within the next 12 months, do not have to be available for work to receive benefit. DHSS offices should be consulted about definitions of these categories and about appropriate benefit support available.

3. Part-time course provision for the unemployed

3.1 The FEU believes that the educational needs which can be met under these regulations have yet to be fully addressed, and the curricular opportunities available fully explored. Programmes can be devised for up to 12 hours (during the qualifying period) and up to 21 hours subsequently. Care should be taken that courses undertaken after the qualifying period are demonstrably different from those in the first three months. A modular approach helps: fresh units can be added after the qualifying period, or this can be designed as an induction or diagnostic course before more specialised provision is embarked upon.

3.2 Many establishments have developed programmes for unemployed people, either in specially designed courses or through infill into existing full-time and part-time (usually day-release) provision or vocational and non-vocational courses.

3.3 More radical and flexible patterns of attendance, modes/pace of learning and assessment which permit people to blend progressive study with planned

work experience and employment opportunities throughout their lives are features of the developing FE curriculum. (FEU publications *Flexible Learning Opportunities*, *Flexible Learning in Action* and *Curriculum Development in the Education of Adults* describe principles and good practice, and give checklists for development).

3.4 Some institutes have developed special programmes for YTS 'graduates', planning a variety of schemes which build on individual YTS experiences of work and training. Key features of the provision have been appropriate assessment and counselling on entry; modular design of the curriculum; cross-departmental programmes; and flexible learning 'workshop' provision.

3.5 The FEU is willing to receive, collate and disseminate on a wider basis any examples of good practice that colleges and others may wish to submit.

4. Supporting part-time programmes for the unemployed

4.1 Liaison at all levels with DHSS officers helps to maximise access to part-time programmes and minimise difficulties arising from the administration of DHSS regulations. Essential items for discussion include the design of supporting documentation, and the machinery for communicating between DHSS Benefit Offices and colleges when queries about courses or students arise.

4.2 A letter or certificate can be provided, signed by the providing institution, giving the student's name/address/age, hours of study contemplated, and confirming how the student's availability for employment is accommodated (e.g. by 'roll on/roll' off provision, providing day release, distance learning arrangements, by designing job placement programmes). An individual timetable for each student showing the hours of supervised class contact alongside (workshop) activities and supervised private study can accompany the student's declaration of availability for suitable employment.

4.3 The provision of specialised counselling support for individual students is essential to underpin their learning activities and mitigate some of the personal and administrative difficulties encountered. Self-help or tutor groups of unemployed people following individual programmes can be formed.

4.4 Publicity about special arrangements for part-time/individual programmes can be disseminated through Jobcentres, Careers Offices and other outlets. Through the media or in leaflets, colleges can describe how 12/21 hour programmes can be used, by describing typical arrangements and personal case studies. It is not normally sufficient to distribute leaflets on full-time courses, even where temporary infilling is possible.

5. *Some issues for staff involved in developing programmes*

5.1 Administrative arrangements

Definitions of part-time and full-time provision vary between DHSS and DES for the purposes of Burnham calculations, fees charged to students over 18, and different LEAs have different policies regarding remission of fees for unemployed people. Individual institutions therefore need to check local regulations and arrangements when designing new programmes.

5.2 SB versus 'grant' for 16- to 18-year-olds

There is often confusion in the minds of potential students about the financial support available whilst studying, which admissions staff should seek to clear. Whilst it is currently the case that gross income for 16- to 18-year-olds will generally be higher if they claim SB whilst studying part-time than if they opt for a full-time course and apply for an LEA maintenance award, colleges need to ensure that students are aware that:

- i) part-time students have to pay for books, stationery, equipment and examination fees;
- ii) part-time students are not usually eligible for the range of local concessions for local transport;
- iii) parents of young people aged up to 19 in full-time non-advanced education will continue to receive child benefit and, if in receipt of supplementary benefit themselves, are entitled to appropriate dependency additions.

APPENDIX F

Implementing Open Learning in Local Authority Institutions (FEU/Open Tech, 1986) made the following recommendations for open learning provision:

Resourcing

1. The possibility of buying in learning materials for use in open learning provision should be considered before investment is made in in-house development.
2. Institutions and their providing authorities should formulate policies on open learning provision.
3. In the case of open learning schemes set up in response to industrial and commercial needs, institutions should be able to gain access to funds, whatever their source, with a minimum of delays.
4. Authorities should seek to ease constraints on the management of funds that have been allocated, acquired or generated, and should invite institutions to initiate discussions with them on ways in which this may be achieved.
5. Authorities that have not already done so should adopt forms of budgeting and financial management which will allow agreed surpluses to be retained and used flexibly by their institutions. Such flexibility should involve wider powers of virement, where that is necessary, and should provide for a carry over between financial years.
6. Work volume calculations in respect of open learning clients should be based on the Burnham regulation for part-time students and involve a calculation based on notional individual study hours.

Resource Development

7. Local education authorities should designate co-ordinators with specific responsibility to advise on and facilitate developments in open learning, and they should nominate senior officers to carry active responsibility for open learning.
8. In deploying tutorial staff in open learning, institutions should allocate a number of client learners (usually known as a caseload) to a tutor and then use a locally negotiated formula to convert caseloads to tutor hour equivalents (often referred to as class contact credit). Local negotiations should be based on national guidelines.
9. Local negotiations should consider the need for regular review of tutor caseloads.

10. Current experience indicates that, in the short term, a scale of class contract credit of six client learners per hour should form a basis for local negotiations.
11. New developments in the nature of learning materials will demand varying degrees of support, and therefore the need for flexibility in negotiating class contract credit will, in the long term, be paramount.
12. Any removal of time barriers in open learning leads to variable demands upon an institution which require a commitment to operational flexibility in local agreements.
13. Authorities and institutions should give careful consideration to the role of administrative and other support staff in open learning schemes when staffing establishments are under consideration.
14. The formulation of staff development policies in relation to open learning should be accorded priority by institutions and authorities.
15. Authorities and institutions should assess critically their allocation of space for open learning with respect to both tutors' and learners' needs.
16. Institutions should provide their tutors with access to telephones appropriate to the needs of open learning.

Cost and Pricing

17. Cost information must play an important part in the management of open learning schemes.
18. Where prices are related to costs there should be a degree of uniformity in the calculation of tutor costs, at least within the area of a local authority but possibly also within regional boundaries.
19. In the pricing of open learning provision for employer-sponsored clients, every opportunity should be taken to recover full costs.
20. The pricing of provision for unemployed clients seeking open learning to enable them to retain or enhance their employability presents a problem which should be addressed at both local and national level.
21. Where open learning is offered as an alternative means of delivery for a conventional course, the tuition cost element of the price should reflect the fee structure of and policy governing the traditional delivery system.
22. Where open learning provision leads to the need for inter-authority payments, recoupment should be based on the standard hours figure applicable to the conventional course to which the open learning course corresponds. Where

no conventional analyses exists, until further advice is given by IAPC, the claim should be based on 80 per cent of the hours estimated for learner completion of a package by its producers.

National Issues

During the course of the project on which this Guide is based, a number of issues were raised which, in the opinion of the Steering Committee, require action at national level. These issues are:

1. The Burnham Further Education Committee should examine both the manner in which open learning may best be taken into account in the calculation of institution unit totals and the impact of the grading of courses on open learning development.
2. Action is required of the National Joint Council for Further Education Teachers in England and Wales in developing national guidelines to assist local negotiations on converting tutor caseloads to class-contact hours.
3. The pricing of provision for unemployed clients seeking open learning to enable them to retrain or enhance their employability presents a problem which should be addressed at national level.
4. Clarification is required from the Inter-Authority Payments Committee on the basis of claims for inter-authority payments related to open learning, particularly in the case of those schemes which have no conventional analogue.

There is one further issue not raised in the Guide but which is considered sufficiently important to warrant discussion at national level.

5. The formula in use for calculations within the Rate Support Grant negotiations takes account of only those further education students who are full-time, sandwich or part-time on release from employment. The exclusion of open and distance learners from the calculations may prove to be a disincentive for LEAs who are considering the development of open learning schemes.

APPENDIX G

Adult Unemployment and the Curriculum (FEU, 1985) contains the following check-list which acts as a useful guide to the curriculum planner:

CURRICULUM PLANNING CHECK-LIST

In this Institution:

(Tick as Appropriate)
 Yes No Not relevant

a) Principles and Policies

Theme One: Values and Principles

- Agreement has been reached about the intended value of the provision to potential learners () () ()
- Consideration has been given to the socio-political stance of the provision () () ()
- The specific objectives of the provision have been clarified () () ()
- Attention has been given to the importance of 'confidence-raising' () () ()

Theme Two: Constraints

- Attention has been given to the possibility of 're-prioritising' existing budgets to support work with the unemployed () () ()
- The possibility of seeking additional funds for such provision has been considered () () ()
- The restraints on the curriculum imposed by the criteria for external funding have been examined () () ()
- The extent to which the provision is able to take on board political issues raised by the work has been clarified () () ()

Theme Three: Collaboration

- Attention has been paid to the need to establish collaborative links with other local providers in order to meet the diversity of learner needs () () ()

- Collaboration between statutory and voluntary sectors has been explored () () ()
- Appropriate links have been established with other providers to assist student progression () () ()

b) Design

Theme Four: Target Groups

- A satisfactory working definition of 'the unemployed' has been reached () () ()
- Decisions have been made as to who, amongst the unemployed, provision will be geared towards () () ()

Theme Five: Identifying Learner Needs

- Efforts have been made to elicit the views of unemployed people on their educational needs () () ()
- Statistics on the labour market have been collated and consulted () () ()

Theme Six: Location and Timing

- Consideration has been given to the costs and benefits of mounting provision 'off-site' () () ()
- Serious attention has been given to the desirability of providing a year-round programme () () ()
- The relevance of a 'roll-on/roll-off' approach has been investigated () () ()

Theme Seven: Publicity

- Attention has been given to 'active' forms of publicity () () ()
- An appropriate 'label' has been chosen for the programme () () ()

c) Implementation

Theme Eight: Negotiation

- Steps have been taken to involve participants actively in decisions about their learning () () ()

- The relevance of negotiation throughout the programme has been recognised () () ()
- Negotiation is seen as a two-way process () () ()

Theme Nine: Learning/Teaching methods

- Steps have been taken to distinguish the learning situation from participants' memories of schooling () () ()
- The need to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning has been recognised in the choice of teaching/learning methods () () ()
- Tutors have considered the potential of group work for motivating learners () () ()
- Tutors have developed ways of contributing actively to students' learning as part of an adult-to-adult relationship () () ()

Theme Ten: Learner Support

- Attention has been given to the provision of guidance and support () () ()
- The value of informal support has been recognised () () ()
- Steps have been taken to ensure organisational arrangements are sensitive to the economic and other constraints on learners () () ()
- Particular attention has been given to the support needs of 'infill' students () () ()
- Ways have been developed for helping students to decide where to move on to, and for offering continuing support if appropriate () () ()

d) Evaluation and Development

Theme Eleven: Assessment and Accreditation

- Consideration has been given to the danger that any formal learner assessment incorporated in the programme may give the impression that they are 'back at school' () () ()

- The value of self-referenced feedback to learners has been recognised () () ()
- Attention has been given to the potential costs and benefits of certification. () () ()

Theme Twelve: Monitoring

- Procedures have been set up for recording and reviewing the development of provision, and for using this information in designing future provision () () ()
- Provision has been made for gathering student reactions to the programme () () ()
- Information will be obtained on student progression () () ()

Theme Thirteen: Staffing and Staff Development

- Arrangements have been made to provide staff with adequate support () () ()
- Some tutors have themselves had experience of unemployment or redundancy () () ()
- A programme of staff development has been linked to the provision and includes all staff involved in the work () () ()

Theme Fourteen: Integration

- Attention has been given to the integration of the programme with the other work of the institution () () ()
- Arrangements have been made to ensure that the staff involved in the work feel they belong to the host institution () () ()

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Objectives

The objects for which **The Further Education Unit (FEU)** is established are to promote, encourage and develop the efficient provision of further education in the United Kingdom and for that purpose:

- a) to review and evaluate the range of existing further education curricula and programmes and to identify overlap, duplication, deficiencies and inconsistencies therein;
- b) to determine priorities for action to improve the provision of further education and to make recommendations as to how such improvements can be effected;
- c) to carry out studies in further education and to support investigations of and experimentation in, and the development of further education curricula and to contribute to and assist in the evaluation of initiatives in further education;
- d) to disseminate and publish information and to assist in the dissemination and publication of information about recommendations for and experiments and developments in further education.

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